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THE SHAW MEMORIAL

AUGUSTUS SAINT GAUDENS

SOLDIERS MONUMENTS

BY JAMES BARNES

A STORY is related of a Hebrew on his wedding journey who, noticing that his wife was absorbed in the advertisements in the back of a ten-cent magazine, attracted her attention by pointing out of the window of the moving car at the landscape.

"Rachel," he exclaimed, "look at the view! It is worth money."

If it was from this standpoint that the observer could appreciate many of the soldiers monuments scattered about the country these supposed works of art might be considered great successes.

The money that is represented by the

bronze effigies and misshapen stone and marble scarecrows would probably run into the millions. Our battle-fields are marred and disfigured more by the statues and memorial figures than they ever were by shot or shell. There is not a traveler in New England who is not familiar with the quaint figure leaning on a musket and standing guard over an ill-kept plot of grass in the village square. These stereotyped sentinels are reproduced over and over again everywhere. But this "soldiers monument" is not so bad as the more ambitious and pretentious monuments in larger towns, which force them-



SOLDIERS MONUMENT

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

selves upon attention and make absurd those they would honor.

The writer was standing recently in the city hall park of a prosperous Pennsylvania city of over 100,000 inhabitants. Before him rose a stone and bronze conglomeration intended to perpetuate the memory of the men who had served their country and who had died in the cause of freedom. It did not require one of artistic mind or education to appreciate the ridiculousness of this expensive monument. On the roof of a Grecian Temple stand four bronze figures of marvelous proportions in startling attitudes. An in-

fantryman, in the attitude of charge bayonets, is toppling over the ledge—a self-satisfied and bland expression on his mustachioed countenance. Next to him is a sailor who seems surely destined to break a leg and has borrowed the infantryman's face in order to show his carelessness of consequences, and on his left hand is an artilleryman with a sponge and swab looking up at the windows of the nearby office building as if contemplating seeking a job. An officer with a spy glass is sighting directly at the office of the President of the City Council. Between each of these

figures is a stone cannon-ball only fit for Mons Meg. But, marvel of marvels, from the very center of the roof rises a tall shaft of polished stone, surmounted by an Ionic-Corinthian Capital into which is interwoven the arms of the United States. And, furthermore, balancing like a circus lady, on a bronze globe, on top of all this, is Liberty, or Peace, or Victory, and Justice, all rolled in one. And the designer could not refrain from the cannon-ball habit even at this altitude, for if the lady with the sword and the wreath (and, if I mistake not, the scales, also) would condescend to step from the globe she might be expected to start kicking goals to all points of the compass!

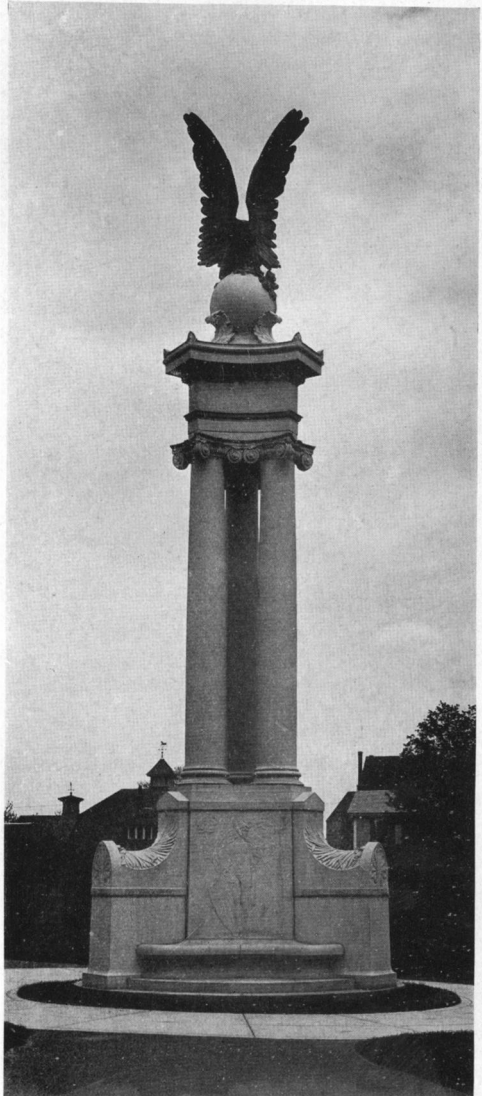
And this ornate and perfectly obtrusive collection cost a lot of money! In fact that is the first thing they tell you in regard to it. Now had there been any well-directed supervision of such monuments, this one, like hundreds of others, would never have existed and in place of it there would be something that a city of growing culture would be proud to boast of. I have not mentioned the name of this particular place because I was requested by a man who lives there (and to whom this memorial is a thing of horror) not to do so.

The visitor to the National Cemeteries has a fair opportunity to study the results of misplaced zeal. Some of these objects are almost pathetic in their incongruity and archaic lack of form. In a graveyard in a little town in Eastern Long Island, where several veterans of the war have been laid to rest, is one of the most astonishing tombstones to be found in this or any country. The man in whose honor it was erected had been a prominent citizen and a "soldier and sailor, too," but when the sculptor sought to commemorate his many virtues and his deeds he stretched it a bit too far. Lying prone on his back, attired in armor of the time of Charles I—fluted thigh greaves and chased gauntlets and all of it—the hero lies with his right foot crossed over his left, thumbs and fingers joined and pointed upward above his armored chest, in an attitude which proves conclusively to the student of such things that he had

been twice to the crusades! However, in order to render a touch of realism, the sculptor has adorned the hero's head with a sailor's sou'wester with the strings tied under his chin.

From an artistic and architectural viewpoint the more ambitious attempts to commemorate the deeds and valor of brave men have hardly been less ridiculous.

There was a time, and it is not so very long ago, when art and architecture in the



SOLDIERS MONUMENT

WHITINSVILLE, MASS.



SOLDIERS AND SAILORS ARCH

PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

United States were at a standstill. Mansard roof, pilot-house cupola, auger-hole decorations, and jigsaw ornament composed the architect's stock in trade, and to this era belong not a few of our soldiers monuments. With the advance in knowledge and the better education of the masses has come an appreciation of better things, but it is only by the formation of art commissions that a proper supervision can be exercised and our parks and cemeteries kept free from eyesores. New York and some of the other large cities have already taken such steps and their public parks are safeguarded, but the smaller towns may still continue, in all ignorance, their work of self-disfiguration.

A memorial should combine the effect not only of decoration, but grace and dignity, and should fittingly accord with

its natural surroundings. To the last, especially, too little attention has been paid. The huge fountain at Indianapolis, which is reproduced in this article, while fine in itself and well placed in the center of the plaza, would be much finer if it were not so ornate. The first suggestion one gets from a view of it is that it must have cost a lot of money. But comparing it with many of the other memorials that cost quite as much, it may be considered an ornament, and certainly it adds distinction to the city.

Nowhere in Europe does there exist anything that is better of its kind than the Shaw Memorial that faces the State Capitol at Boston. If Augustus Saint Gaudens had left nothing else upon which his fame might rest, well might he be satisfied with the work he has done here. It is one of the latter-day pilgrim shrines of

New England, and the visitor is repaid in the actual sensation that viewing it engenders. The intrepid colonel riding at the head of his colored regiment seems to bear in the very expression of his countenance a vision of what was so soon to follow. One can almost hear the shuffling of the heavy boots as the dusky line swings along. How marvelously the types have been studied! Here are black men from the Congo and from the upper Nile; the sons and descendants of imported slaves marching to set their brethren at liberty. There is a purpose in every face; a dignity of motive. The marvelous handling of the subject has prevented the composition of so many figures from being crowded, and the story is told there. The sense of dramatic values is not absent. The men who fell at Fort Wagner in that gallant charge one sees here face to face. "He is buried with his niggers," was the reply sent back by the Confederates when attempts were made to secure the body of their Colonel. And the mounted figure with the drawn sword is that of a man who

would accept with pride such a final resting-place. Of all the soldiers monuments the Shaw Memorial stands pre-eminent. The Farragut and the Sherman statues in New York and the Logan Statue in Chicago, splendid as they are, do not give the effect or cause the sensations that this tribute to the black regiment evokes. It is in a class by itself. But sculptors like Saint Gaudens are epoch-makers in the history of a nation's art. The average sculptor possesses no such talent or individuality. Commissioned by some historical association or society to design a monumental work he is too apt to reproduce the conventional or to attempt to satisfy the views of men of little artistic knowledge or perceptions. It is one of the duties of art commissions, formed of men who are competent to judge the fitting and the well-done; to see that, in the future, memorials shall possess a higher excellence of workmanship and composition, and, if possible, to see that many of the prominent "hideosities" be removed and something more dignified and fitting take their place.

OVERDRESSED ROOMS

BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

THERE are few situations in which one feels more helpless than in selecting furniture and arranging it in the home. In a great department store or "furniture emporium" the customer is as much at sea as a passenger washed overboard in mid-ocean. Having no trustworthy compass of taste, how shall the purchaser steer a wise course in this bewildering flood of household objects? In this perplexity one is apt to be guided by the price—which is the only familiar landmark, and picking out the highest-priced article one can afford, be persuaded that it is the most beautiful. No matter what other qualities the object may boast of, appearances must be in its favor. Its material may be counterfeit; its design clumsy; its workmanship faulty, but its

symbols of costliness must be many and conspicuous.

To meet this demand, furniture makers spend much effort in multiplying these symbols, well knowing that the world is still deceived by ornament. Such a piece of furniture is only a gazing-stock, whose appendages and trimmings are to amaze the ignorant. It is but a hodge-podge sitting in art's accustomed seat. The buyer would soon lose his embarrassment in the presence of these pretenders if he or she asked them the meaning of their tawdry badges. Confusion arises because their titles are not called in question, meaningless forms being dignified with the name of decoration.

As a human being depends upon his bones and muscles for his grace and